

program such needs will multiply, again requiring a consistent strategy as to how to meet these needs on a continuing basis.

Economics was the third category that received many comments. The major concern was how to pay for this program. At the universal level it is the equivalent of adding another year to the budget of the public schools, which is no small matter. Aside from Georgia's use of the lottery, there were few insights as to how the program was going to be financed aside from gradually increasing this budget year-by-year. A phase-in strategy is almost sure to be used by most states to allow for gradual increases in the budget to pay the bill for this new prekindergarten program.

COMMON THEMES

The investigators found several common elements across all five states. These included, (1) the importance of political leadership, (2) the goal of trying to reduce school failure in the early grades, (3) the importance of making this program a piece of a larger educational reform package, (4) the cooperation between professional and political leaders, and (5) the increase of mothers in the workforce putting pressure on decision makers for some type of action.

Major differences between the states were found in: (1) the manner of financing the program, (2) gradual versus sudden implementation, (3) how the program was administered and the degree of support services provided to back-up the program.

LESSONS LEARNED

Among the suggestions provided by the investigators to other states that might be thinking about state action for prekindergartens or expanding existing programs, the five most important were:

- link the program with other educational reform packages,
- target children who are not developing in ways that could make likely their successful entry to school ('at-risk' children),
- seek political leadership and support,
- establish a funding source, if possible, one that does not take away from other state services, and
- encourage collaboration among the many early childhood stakeholders within the state.

Other suggestions were: develop strategies for transportation, build a data system to collect needed information, and stress program quality such as using certified personnel and well developed curriculum. ■